

Healthwatch: October is Breast Cancer Awareness

According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), breast cancer is one of the most common type of cancer among women in the United States, second only to skin cancer. NCI estimate more than 180,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year.

Early detection is paramount for the quickest and most complete recovery.

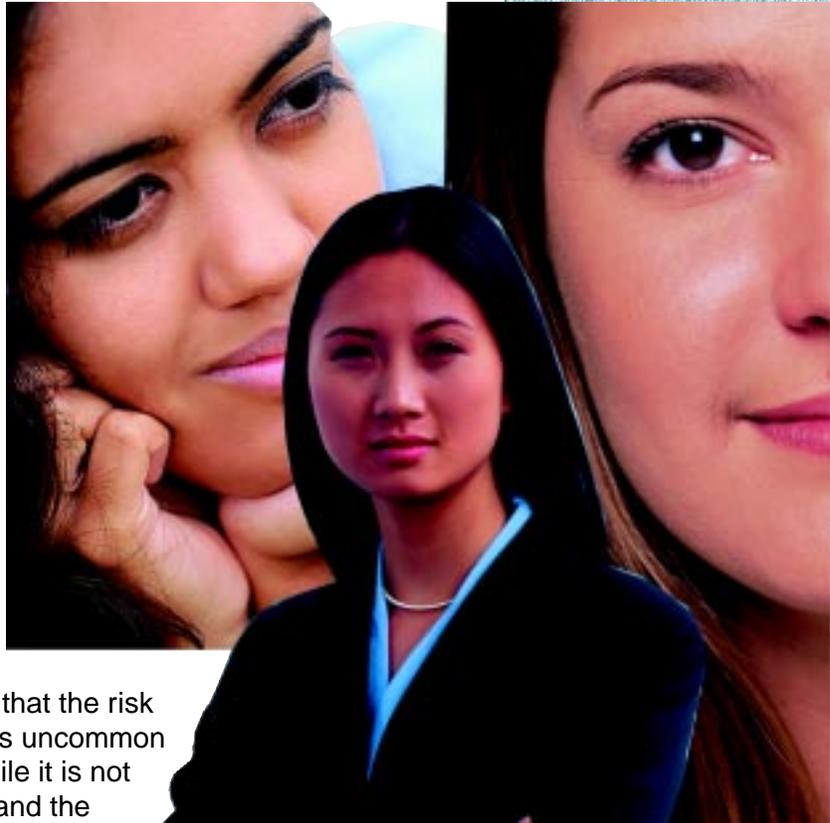
Medical research shows that certain conditions may increase a woman's risk of getting breast cancer, such as a personal history of breast cancer, family history, certain breast changes, genetic alterations, late childbearing, and taking hormone replacements.

Medical experts do not know what causes this disease, but report that the risk increases as a woman gets older. It is uncommon for women under age 35 to get it, while it is not uncommon for women over age 50, and the highest risk occurs for women over age 60. It is also more common in white women than African American or Asian women.

What's your best defense against breast cancer? Make sure you perform monthly breast self-exams at home, see your family doctor for clinical breast exams and have regular screening mammograms. NCI reports that the screening mammogram is currently the best procedure for finding breast cancer before symptoms occur.

Research also indicates regular exercise and drinking milk of any type, three or more glasses a day, can also aid in reducing the chances of getting breast cancer

Medical studies reveal that mammograms reduce the risk of dying from breast cancer. According to the NCI, most doctors recommend that women in their forties and older have mammograms every two years.



Additional information on breast cancer is available at www.cancer.gov/cancer_information.

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